2001 Climate Summary

January's precipitation was near normal to above normal across the southern two thirds of Minnesota. Temperatures were above normal across the state in January, but this was not enough to melt the deepening snow pack. Snow depths by the end of January exceeded a foot in many areas of the state. The precipitation in February was much above normal, with some places in Minnesota receiving double or triple the normal amount of precipitation for the month. By the first week of March, the snow pack in Minnesota generally contained three to five inches of water. Some areas within the Minnesota River basin reported five to six inches of snow water equivalent. March was cooler than normal, but precipitation was below normal too, so this delayed the spring melt-off. By the end of March, the threat of flooding rivers loomed, especially on the Minnesota.

March was followed by the wettest April in history across many locations in the state. Many places in southern and central Minnesota had over six inches of precipitation for the month, with a few locales topping 8 inches. The combination of heavy precipitation and melting snow caused major flooding on many of Minnesota's rivers. May continued the trend of above-normal precipitation over the eastern and northern parts of the state. Southwestern, west central, and central Minnesota reported near average May precipitation. April plus May 2001 precipitation totals ranked near all-time record high values for portions of southeastern, east central, central, northeastern, and north central Minnesota. The temperatures in May seesawed from near record highs in the middle of the month, to record low maximum temperature records by the third week of the month.

June precipitation varied widely. After some heavy rains and severe weather in the second week of the month, the weather turned drier and precipitation was light for the rest of the month. Continuing a dry period that commenced during the second half of June, July precipitation totals were generally below average across most of Minnesota. Rainfall amounts during July generally fell short of historical averages by one to two inches. Moisture stress was observed in row crops planted in coarse textured soils. The exception to the general July dryness was far northern Minnesota where thunderstorms dropped significant rain during the month. July average temperatures finished slightly above historical averages. However, the near normal monthly means were the result of very warm mid-month and month-end temperatures offsetting cool early July weather. The dry weather of late June and July persisted into August in many areas. August precipitation totals were below average across much of the southern two thirds of Minnesota. Rainfall amounts during August generally fell short of historical averages by one to two inches in these areas. Scattered sections of northwestern and southeastern Minnesota finished the month with above normal precipitation.

September delivered welcome rainfall to many of the areas experiencing precipitation shortfalls earlier in the growing season. September totals topped historical averages by one to three inches across all but northeastern Minnesota. While the September precipitation ameliorated the dry conditions, many central and northern areas continued to report rainfall deficits for the season and remained dependent on adequate autumn rainfalls to replenish surface water systems. October precipitation was variable across Minnesota with above normal precipitation in the north, and below normal precipitation in the south. November brought record warm temperatures and plenty of precipitation, especially to southwest Minnesota. The ground had not yet frozen; so much of this precipitation was able to percolate into the soil. December was below normal in precipitation, but much above normal for temperatures. This began the balmy winter of 2001-2002.

Source: State Climatology Office, DNR – Division of Waters